Another AHA Scientific Sessions fades into history and there was much to celebrate from the BCVS Council.

In addition to the hundreds of outstanding presentations, the BCVS honorary lectures provided by Dr. Paul Simpson (Smith Memorial Lecture) and Dr. Joe Loscalzo (Brown Memorial Lecture) were simply outstanding.

The Leadership Committee met for hours before Sessions to discuss a wide range of topics that cannot all be enumerated here due to space limitations. Among the highlights, the fiscal health of the BCVS remains excellent and we have opted to put some of our Council funds toward new initiatives that hopefully will foster the continued growth and vitality of the AHA.

Focus on Membership

One of the most important goals of the AHA is to attract new membership, particularly young people. I am proud to say that this year our Membership Committee led by Dr. Hossein Ardehali hit a record in recruitment of new Fellows of the American Heart Association with 30 new members of BCVS approved for FAHA status! This tripled the average number of new members for any single year and earned Dr. Ardehali the special recognition of “Young Most Valuable Player Award” at the annual BCVS dinner. A second worthy recipient of that award was Dr. Åsa Gustafsson, honored for her outstanding contributions and high level enthusiasm she has infused into the inaugural year of our BCVS Early Career Committee. I asked Åsa to provide a short summary of the progress she has made with the Early Career Committee during her short tenure as chair, and it is remarkable. (See her summary on the next page.) We expect to see even more innovative ideas in the years ahead.

The young investigators this group targets for engagement are the lifeblood of BCVS, as they will hopefully pursue a career in basic cardiovascular research and become integral members of the AHA. The habits we learn early on serve us for the rest of our lives. Therefore, we must make a concerted effort to bring these promising young researchers in at the beginning of their careers and introduce them to the benefits of AHA participation and membership. If you are a member of BCVS in the early stage of your career, consider joining the Early Career activities that Åsa has planned. It’s a great way to get involved and interact with your peers as well as the leadership of the BCVS.

Slightly off topic but very important: Get out your calendars now for the annual BCVS summer meeting in New Orleans, July 18–21. It is the premier venue for seeing the future of basic research and schmoozing with your cardiovascular scientific peers. Be there or miss out on the best science and the most fun you’ll ever have at a cardiovascular conference.

Summary of BCVS 2010 Scientific Sessions

John W. Calvert, PhD, Emory University School of Medicine

The annual BCVS Scientific Sessions provides a platform for scientists and physicians to discuss new and exciting information from the field of cardiovascular research. The 2010 conference, held July 19–22 at the Rancho Los Palmas Resort in Rancho Mirage, Calif., certainly lived up to this expectation and exceeded it in so many ways. The program committee spearheaded by Gerald Dorn and Peipei Ping arranged an excellent program centered on the theme of “Technological and Conceptual Advances in Cardiovascular Disease.” Presentations ranged from the characterization of molecular techniques used to identify cellular targets in experimental models to the use of cutting-edge technologies to diagnose and treat patients with cardiovascular disease.

The opening session on “Technologies Driving New Biological Insight” truly set the tone for the whole conference. Craig Venter detailed his group’s effort to create synthetic life by generating the genome of a bacterium from the ground up and Nobel Laureate Roger Tsien regaled the audience with the Keynote Lecture detailing his discovery of different molecules that allow for one to spy on cells in health and disease.

Day 2 opened with several presentations detailing “Systems Approaches to Cardiovascular Biology” before shifting to cardioprotection, microRNAs and cell death. James Downey highlighted...
the cardioprotection portion of the morning section with a sobering outlook on the state of cardioprotection in experimental and clinical settings. In the afternoon session, Carlo Croce provided one of the more entertaining talks of the meeting with his introduction of microRNAs before giving way to Eric Olson who demonstrated that microRNAs could be targeted for the treatment of cardiovascular disease. In the final session of the day, Richard Kitsis closed with a rather thorough overview of cell death pathways.

In the opening session of Day 3, Christine Seidman provided insights into new sequencing strategies and Roger Hajjar detailed cardiac gene therapy clinical trials. After the mid-morning break, Mark Sussman opened the next session on cardiac regeneration with an introductory lecture on improving cardiac progenitor cells through genetic manipulation. Joshua Hare ended this session by providing evidence that bone marrow derived mesenchymal stem cells could stimulate the proliferation and differentiating of endogenous cardiac stem cells. The afternoon sessions featured insightful lectures ranging from Luca Scorrano’s presentation on the interactions between the endoplasmic reticulum and mitochondria to Jeff Molkentin’s overview of pro-hypertrophic calcium to, finally, Tom Force’s look at the role of GSK-3 isoforms in hypertrophy, remodeling and cardiomyocyte proliferation. The final day of the conference featured two separate career development sessions with presentations focused on how to write a manuscript, how to write an AHA grant, how to apply for your first faculty position, and how to transition from mentee to mentor. The program will also feature several short oral presentations by up-and-coming young scientists.

In addition, the AHA has a formal program for early career investigators at Scientific Sessions in November which include formal presentations, meet the mentor sessions and several breakout sessions. The BCVS will participate in the Early Career day at Scientific Sessions 2011 in Orlando, Fla., and we plan to have a breakout session specifically for young investigators in the basic sciences. To ensure that the AHA achieves its mission, we must continue to invest in the careers of young investigators. These young men and women are the AHA leaders of tomorrow, and it is our responsibility to maintain ongoing development programs that encourage and support promising students, post-docs and junior faculty as they begin their scientific careers.

**Early Career Program**

**Asa B. Gustafsson, PhD, FAHA**

Scientific meetings are important “launching pads” for young investigators. These meetings provide young investigators with opportunities to present their research, meet key investigators in their field and network. There is usually a strong contingent of trainees and early career members at the summer BCVS meetings, and I had the pleasure of meeting many of you at the meeting in Palm Desert last year. Many of you offered excellent feedback and suggestions on how we can improve these meetings for young investigators. During the past few months, the Early Career Committee has been working with Drs. Junichi Sadoshima and Joshua Hare, the co-organizers of the next BCVS meeting in New Orleans, to include several events for young investigators. I am happy to report that there will be two separate career development sessions with presentations focused on how to write a manuscript, how to write an AHA grant, how to apply for your first faculty position, and how to transition from mentee to mentor. The program will also feature several short oral presentations by up-and-coming young scientists.

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**Highlights from Scientific Sessions**

**BCVS Pre-Dinner Speaker**

Nancy Brown, AHA Chief Executive Officer

**BCVS Council Outstanding Service Award**

Nancy Brown recognized Marvin A. Konstam for his 26 years of outstanding service.

**BCVS Distinguished Service Award**

Council chair Mark Sussman presented to Rong Tian

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